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That all or even a majority of the rugs of the Orient are beautiful, few of Western birth, perhaps, would maintain. But this much must be said of the product as a whole: setting aside all considerations of durability and pattern, the rich, harmonious colorings prompted by Oriental taste are superb. The deep, subdued tones were a revelation when they were introduced into the Western world, and they have had a marked influence on Western decoration. It is to be doubted if the product of the looms of Kidderminster, Wilton, Worcester, Rothdale, Halifax, Dewsbury, and Durham, in England, or of our own Philadelphia, would be what they are to-day in point of artistic coloring were it not for the examples set by the plodding, convention-tied women of the East, who have learned the secret of mixing dyes that last for ages and please without palling.

W. G. MARQUIS.



### CONVENTION IN ART

When Japanese art had begun to be known generally in Europe and in America the criticism was frequently made that it was exceedingly conventional. As a matter of fact, it was scarcely more conventional than our own art; its conventionalities were only different from those of Occidental art, and as they were less familiar more notice was taken of them. Many of them have now been accepted and incorporated into Western art, and have ceased to be considered as arbitrary characteristics.

From childhood we have been taught to make our judgment of artistic representations of every kind, dependent upon a tacit agreement to accept as truthful representation many things which are but little more than symbols, to say nothing of certain broad generalities of such agreements, as that a sculptured figure shall not be expected to



LA MELANCOLIE  
Original Engraving by Albrecht Durer  
Showing Conventional Drapery



SECTION OF AN ACTRESS  
Showing Natural Eye

reproduce color, and that painting may represent three dimensions with two.

One of the earliest known examples of pictorial art was the contour of a mastodon scratched on a bone by a cave-dweller, and in this crude effort of a primitive artist there was conventionality. This instance also shows how artistic conventionalities grew out of the limitations of the artist's materials. One can imagine how the work of this artist of the post-glacial period was received by his friends, the critics of his time. They doubtless saw that the color, size, and hairy covering of the beast were not even suggested, but were willing to excuse this because the artist had done his best with the materials at his command. His rude scratchings were a record of what they had seen in nature, and they recognized that, although imperfect, the picture possessed value.

Lines are constantly used in every form of graphic art, and yet lines do not exist in nature. A contour which simply indicates the boundaries of a form is accepted as a representation of it. But forms in nature are not bounded by lines. In drawings and etchings masses of lines become tones and values to those who have been educated to regard them as such, but the untrained eye sees the spaces between



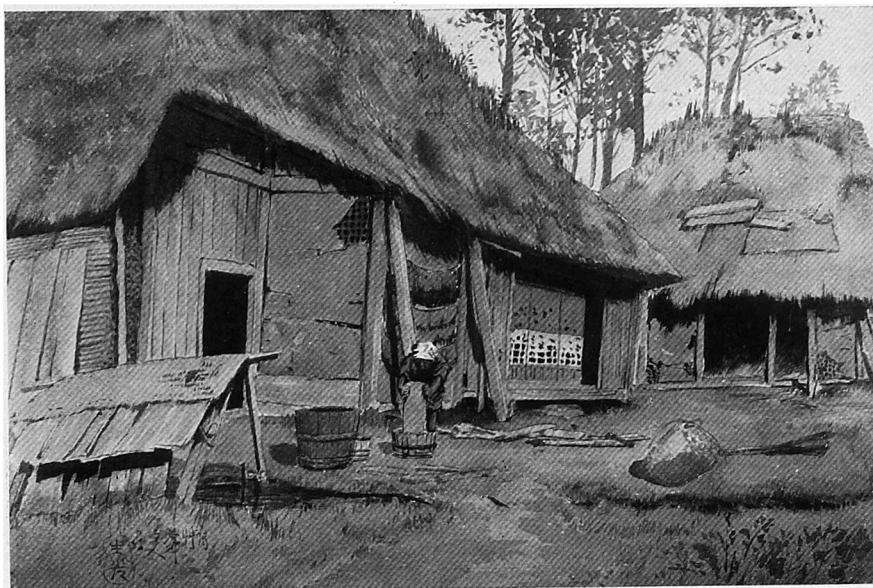
PART OF THE HEAD OF DAVID  
By Michael Angelo  
Showing Sculptured Eye



WOOD-CUT. By Albert Durer  
Showing Conventional Drapery

and often fails to appreciate their meaning. In a painting the same value or tone would be represented by an even wash of color or a mass of pigment, and the observer must replace the standard by which he judged the drawing with another one based on other conventions.

Relation is an important factor in artistic representation. A relative scale of values of dark and light is imposed by the limitations of the materials an artist uses. White paper or white pigment is not so light as a clear sky, and yet painters attempt to represent even the glowing light of the sun or of flames. A stroke of pure ivory black or of the



JAPANESE WATER-COLOR  
Showing Use of Shadow  
Courtesy of H. Deakin

blackest of crayons produces a gray which is extremely dark by comparison with other pigments, but which is far lighter than the blacks which are found in nature. This is clearly demonstrated by photography.

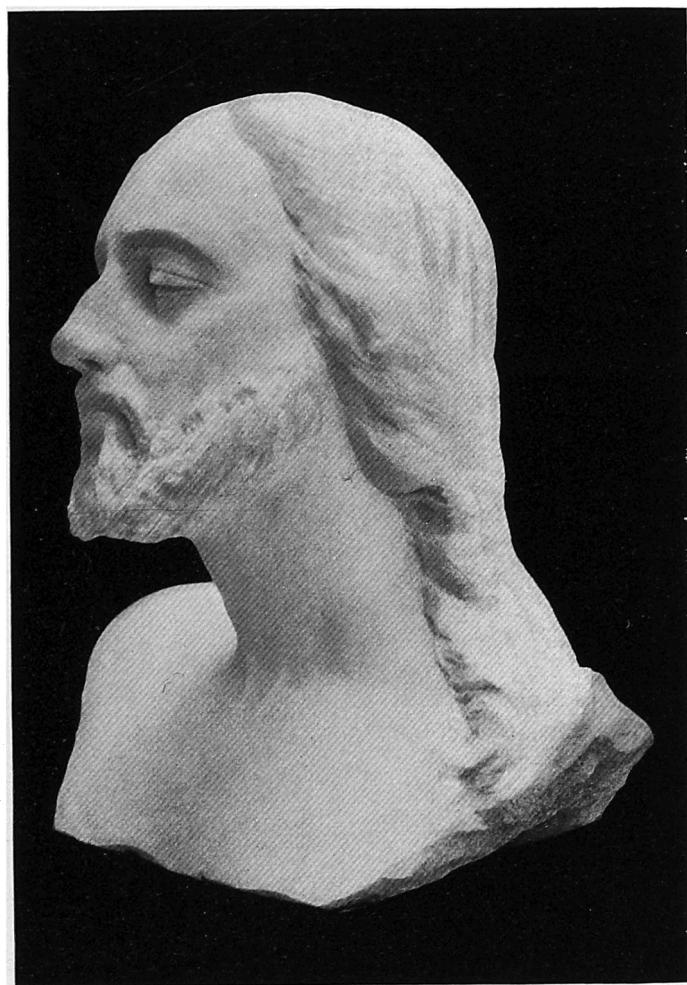
A relative scale of dimensions in both pictorial and plastic representations is so common, that it would be childish even to speak of it as an artistic convention, were it not for other accepted conventions which have grown out of the fact that the scale is not and cannot readily be consistently adhered to. A few examples will illustrate this.

In a landscape blades of grass are represented by brush-strokes which, according to the scale of other objects in the picture, might be an inch in thickness, and yet we have learned to accept the result as the symbol for grass. The like is true of the leaves of trees, hairs, feathers, and other small objects. On the other hand, a flat mass of paint is accepted with equal readiness as a truthful representation of assemblages of the same objects in another painting of similar scale. Many Japanese painters are less conventional in this matter. Instead of suggesting grass by a few strokes which are out of scale or a mass of proper color, they laboriously fill their foregrounds with masses of brush-strokes proportionate to the size of other objects represented.



EARLY JAPANESE PRINT  
Showing Absence of Shadow  
Courtesy of H. Deakin

Curiously enough, there is a tendency to consider present artistic conventions, when once accepted, as final, and to regard any departure from them or any innovation as illegitimate art. It was not so long



HEAD OF CHRIST  
By S. Cecilia Cotter  
Showing Smooth Hair, Suggestive of Light Color

ago that it was not considered proper to use white or opaque color in a water-color. Here was a case where a range of values could be extended considerably, and consequently be made more closely to approach nature, but both artists and the public had learned to believe that unity of material was of primary importance, and barred change.

The invention of photography was a death-blow to many conventionalities of drawing. When artists first drew running horses in poses which instantaneous photographs had taught them to see, the public, which had known only the conventional hobby-horse poses, with four legs extended as a symbol for speed, was unwilling to accept them as truthful. But there was at the same period a blind faith in the veracity of all photographs, and they were at length accepted under protest as truthful, but ugly. To-day the photographic poses are the only ones which are recognized as correct.

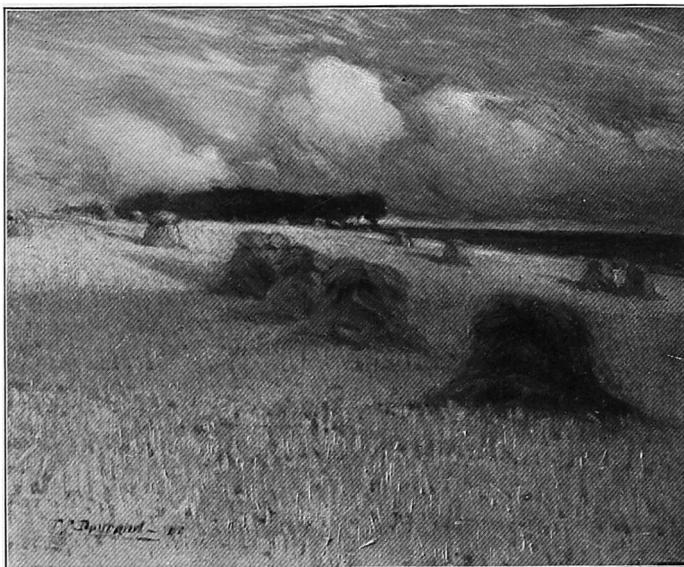
The Japanese observed the flight of birds, and gave truthful representations of it before the Occidental artists had conceived the idea that there was any other way to represent the flight of a bird than by raised and extended wings, and yet any child could have told them that "what goes up must come down." Photography finally convinced them that the Japanese artists had been less conventional than themselves in this matter.

The limitations in values of light and dark imposed by the range of the palette have so long been considered fixed that any attempt to extend them is considered tricky and false. As it has been already suggested, absolute white and absolute black have not yet been produced in pigments, and yet if a landscape painter, after having "played the limit" in attempting to reproduce the actual values of nature, should resort to the use of tinsel, as scene-painters sometimes do, to produce a high light, he would call down censure upon his work if his methods were discovered. By the ethics of painting he is constrained to paint only such subjects as call for a limited range of actual values, or fall back upon the conventionality of a relative scale.

The realists who preceded the impressionist school attempted to reproduce the



BIRDS FLYING  
Showing Actual Poses, from Photographs

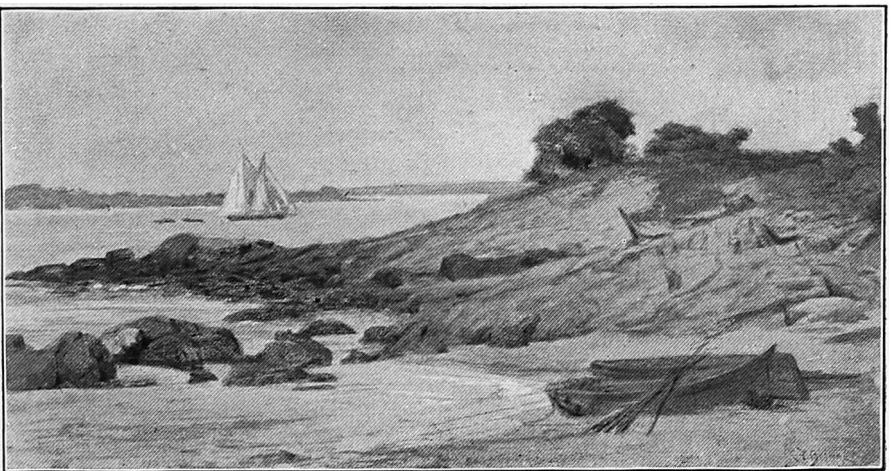


LAST GLOW  
By F. C. Peyraud  
Bright Sky in Art

effect of luminosity was gained, but the truth of the scale of values was lost, and thus a new convention was established.

To-day there is a clearly defined tendency toward tone pictures of

actual values of nature. Their efforts in this direction resulted in the abandoning for a time of sunlight effects, which they deemed unpaintable. Then came the impressionists who painted shadow as nearly true as possible to its actual value and sunlight as light as possible.



GRAY DAY AT CUSHING'S ISLAND  
By Charles Francis Browne  
Dull Sky in Art

a range of actual values easily within the scope of the palette. With a system of relative values few pictures are painted in the same scale. The same actual value of paint may mean something entirely different in one picture from what it does in another. For example, in a gray-day effect and in a sunlight effect the artist will use the highest possible value to represent the highest lights and the strongest darks obtainable in paint to represent the darkest shadow. And yet in the



SUNSET IN THE ADIRONDACKS

By Earl Deakin

Bright Sky by Photography

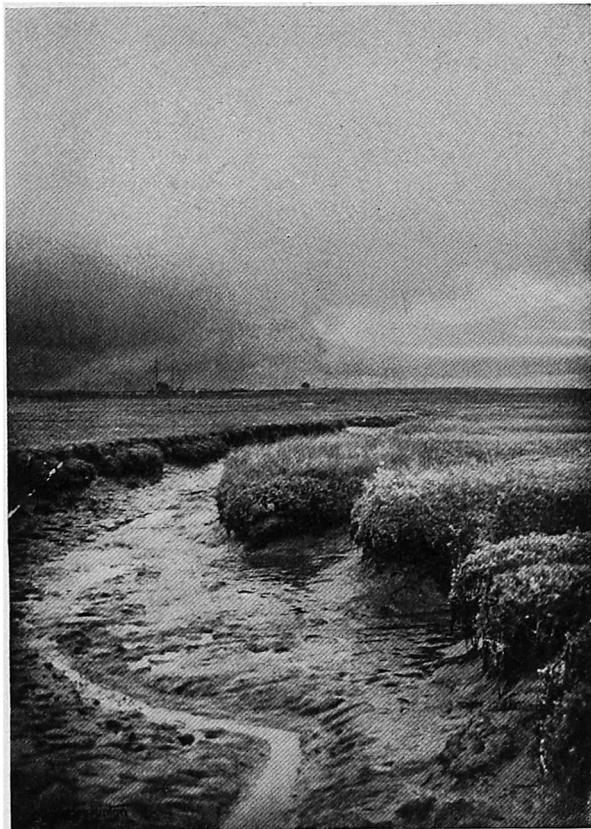
effects seen in nature there exists a wide difference between the respective lights and shadows.

The fact that the mixing of colored pigment with white lowers its value, makes it often possible to paint the almost colorless sky of a gray-day landscape actually lighter than the blue sky of a sunlight effect, or even the red orb of a sunset.

If the relation of the middle tones and tints between the notes of the highest light and deepest shadow is preserved, the result, by convention, is called truthful. The realistic effect of a panorama painting is due simply to the fact that all points of comparison are removed, and much that is real in the foreground in front of the canvas is given

a false value to make it in harmony with the range of values of the painting. The actual earth piled up there, for instance, is mixed with lamp-black to make it match the painted earth of the foreground of the canvas.

It has been a convention of Japanese art that shadows are a defect of nature, and difficulties were avoided by not representing them, particularly in the works of the painters of the older schools. Most of the modern artists of Japan who have not adopted the methods of European artists in great measure have learned something of the use of shadows from them.



RAIN FROM THE SEA  
By A. Horsley  
Gray Sky by Photography

relief to objects in the foreground of their pictures by imposts which might be considered another combination of the two arts. The attempts to suggest color in sculpture have given rise to several conventionalities. One frequently sees a statue in which only a representation of form is given in every detail except the eyes, in which the pupil is represented by a round hole, and the high light which glistens in the living eye is suggested by a bit of marble or bronze left at the top of the hole. Blond or dark hair is suggested by smoothness, which

The conventionalities of sculpture are even more apparent than those of painting. A bas-relief is perhaps the most striking of plastic conventionalities—a sort of compromise between a picture and a statue. The third dimension is often suggested only a little more than in a painting. Some painters give a re-

reflects light, or by broken masses presenting many small shadows. These effects of partial representation of color are so familiar in statuary that they are not considered inconsistent.

A few of the conventionalities of art, some of which we have outgrown, have been mentioned. An inspection of the art of earlier periods will reveal many others. The treatment of drapery in various periods shows a long sequence of conventionalities, and furnishes an interesting study in itself. Decorative art is made of conventionalities, but it is the purpose of this article to call attention only to those which exist in the branches of art which are commonly supposed to be free from them.

Why should attention be called to them? For the reason that a knowledge of their existence may promote a better understanding between artists and laymen. The truth which artists are striving for is a higher truth than an exact representation of nature. Art

should furnish food for the imagination. It should be a poetic expression. The works of realistic painters are chiefly interesting from the fact that it is impossible for them to be absolutely realistic. There is always a personal note.

Again, if we know of the conventionalities which already exist in art, we may be more lenient to the artist who may develop new ones. An artist who goes out to nature, and develops something new from

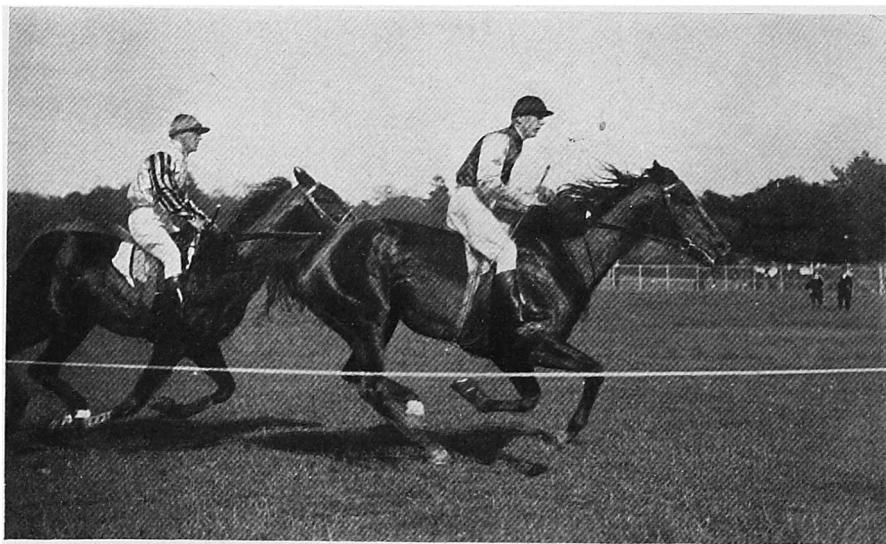


THE FALCONER  
By Eugene Fromentin  
Showing Conventional Horse Pose



AT CHICAMAUGA PARK  
by F. C. Yohn  
Copyright, 1888, by P. F. Collier  
Modern Horse Pose in Art





NATURAL HORSE POSE  
From a Snap-Shot Photograph

the inspiration he receives there, is generally condemned as a falsifier. He may have ignored old, familiar conventions or invented new ones. In a few years he may be hailed as a master. Millet, Corot, Delacroix, Manet, Bastien-Lepage, Whistler, Rodin, and Puvis de Chavannes are a few who have been both reviled and glorified.

EDGAR CAMERON.